

Nomination of Dr. C.V. Ananda Bose for King Baudouin International Development Prize

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An officer with a vision

A hundred years ago bureaucracy meant a rational, efficient method of organisation. In our present era the same bureaucracy has come to mean the diametrically opposite attributes of inefficiency, apocritism and all its associated evils. It has been called the 'enraged incapacity', a remark that is so close to Indian reality that no one, including bureaucrats, may disagree with it. Because, it is rare to find a bureaucrat with an innovative spirit.

But we have always had a few among them who with their sense of social commitment and vision had made bureaucracy more efficient and humane. With a dynamism that is inherent in them these few men and women, in their own way, make things happen in the morose and insipid system of administration. C.V. Ananda Bose of the Kerala IAS cadre is one such daring

young officer who has been able to prove this in his own life. During the past sixteen years of his service in Kerala, he has been launching innovative schemes in diverse areas of administration.

The most important and popular of his innovations is the chain of Nirmithi Kendras for cost-effective housing, which he launched when he was the District Collector of Kollam eight years ago. The Nirmithi approach of housing has today become a trend setter in this sector. Following the Kollam model, nearly three hundred districts in the country have so far established Nirmithi Kendras. In recognition of his outstanding contributions in administrative innovation, and to the field of housing in particular, Bose has been selected for over half a dozen awards and honours which include the prestigious 'Special Habitat Award, 1989' of the Government of India and the Jawaharal Nehru Fellowship of 1994.

Ananda Bose made his debut in administrative innovation while serving as the sub-collector of Kasargode, his first assignment in the State. As a young officer with an innovative and venturing spirit, he began experimenting with small innovations in the day to day administration in the hope that some of those might turn out to be successful. Thus was born the village festival, 'Gramotsava'. The focus of the 'Gramotsava' was the involvement of people in the various develop-

ment programmes. 'Gramotsava' marked the beginning of his many administrative innovations that were to follow.

The great economist J.M. Keynes had once remarked, "The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping old ones". The way Bose gave life to the long languishing Children's Park scheme of Kollam illustrates his ability to escape from the old views. The municipality's annual budget allocation of Rs One lakh for this scheme had remained unspent for years because the amount was perceived to be too small even to complete the preliminary work. Or so everyone thought, until Bose came on the scene as the Collector of Kollam district. He simply initiated the work on the project with the available resources, while at the same time looking for sponsors for the various elements of the project.

Sure enough, as the work progressed, spontaneous responses followed from several agencies including banks and private firms. Today the Children's Park has become a centre of attraction, and perhaps, the only place worth calling a park in the ancient town of Kollam. It is again here that Bose conceived the idea of the Quilon Tourism Promotion Council which later became a blueprint to set up the District Tourism Promotion Councils for other districts of Kerala.

With Ananda Bose as the Collector, it was no wonder that Kollam became the first district in the State to copy the famous Ahmednagar Experiment in administrative reform at the grass roots level. The 'file-to-field' programme initiated by him at Kollam became the launching pad for various need-based programmes. These provided much relief to the people who had until then been kept out of the benefits of much of the official schemes and programmes due to the endless procedural delays and the all-pervasive corruption.

It was his proximity to the people that enabled Bose to understand their problems and find solutions like the Nirmithi Kendras which over the past eight years become one of the leading agencies in the appropriate technical movements in housing in Kerala and other parts of the country. Nirmithi Kendras have successfully demonstrated how to adapt the research



C.V. Ananda Bose

puts of the building research institutions in the country to local conditions. The Nirmithi Kendras make optimum use of the locally available building materials while at the same time reducing the use of expensive items like steel and steel which also have a higher social cost.

Today, the Nirmithi Kendras undertake almost all types of construction activities including public buildings, shopping complexes, houses of varying sizes and designs. They provide a wide range of services which include the employment of skill in different trades of house construction, production and supply of materials, services like consultancy, design, supervision, direct construction. Nirmithi Kendras also provide allied services such as production of steel chulhas and low cost sanitation.

The Kerala State Nirmithi Kendra, the apex body of the Nirmithi Kendras of Kerala runs a number of novel programmes like the 'Nirmithi Gurukul', a forum for the old Masters of traditional architecture to interact with architects and engineers of the new generation, the Nirmithi Institute of Functional Arts and the Nirmithi Clubs for students at the college level.

The Kerala State Nirmithi Kendra is today engaged in the ambitious task of setting up the Nirmithi National Institute of Habitat Management, a unique institution of its kind in the country. The institute is envisaged to serve as a meeting place for experts in housing and habit management. Six new divisions are being created at the nascent institute.

Thanks to the indefatigable spirit of Ananda Bose, what began as the modest answer to a housing problem eight years ago, has today grown into a movement of national proportions. Besides helping an increasing number of houses to be built affordable houses, the Nirmithi movement also has become the source of both direct and indirect employment to thousands of people.

Taking administration to the doorstep of the people is an ideal that our politicians and bureaucrats preach ceaselessly. But Bose has shown that, given a bit of social commitment and imagination, there is tremendous scope for evolving need-based schemes to help the people whose cause every plan is made in the paper. He has also injected life and dynamism into the lacklustre bureaucracy in whatever capacity he worked. He has shown an inner courage to stand and act in an unorthodox way and had no qualms for being different and creative. Men like Bose stand out among the present generation of officers, a majority of whom are so much pre-occupied in their personal ambitions and narrow, sectarian interests. One only hopes that more of such creative ideas will see the light of the day.

THE HINDU, Tuesday, February 6, 1996

Quake-proof houses at Latur from KESNIK

From Our Staff Reporter

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Feb. 5. The Chief Minister, Mr. A. K. Antony, will hand over the keys of 388 quake-proof houses at the Kerala Village in Latur to the Prime Minister, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, at New Delhi on February 7.

Stating this at a press conference here today, the chairman of the Materials Division, Kerala State Nirmithi Kendra (KESNIK), Dr. C. G. Ramachandran Nair, said that a total of 170 houses of three categories are KESNIK's contribution to the village. It has been built at a cost of Rs. 238 per sq. ft.

The KESNIK which has been a pioneer in CEE' (cost-effective and environment-friendly) technology, has designed these houses taking into consideration the peculiar quake-prone conditions prevailing at Latur.

KESNIK has been an active partner along with the Kerala State Housing Board and the Kuriakose Elias Service Society in the conceptualisation and construction of these houses at Latur, a gift of the Kerala Government. The approximate cost of construction works out to Rs. 167 lakhs.

The incorporation of three hinged bands at the basement, lintel and roof levels constitutes a salient feature of KESNIK technology. The structure functions as an integrated whole and enables it to withstand earthquakes up to 7.5 on

the Richter Scale (Latur quake intensity was 6.3). Use of vertical reinforcement provides flexibility to the construction.

Reinforced concrete pillars (mullions) have been provided at corners and junctions along with a 20 cm hollow block masonry wall. A rubble foundation, solid basement, steel door and window frames and a sloping roof are the other features of the houses which were accepted and approved by the Central Building Research Institute (CBRI).

February 7 is being observed as Latur Day by KESNIK and seminars and awareness programmes will be organised here in association with CESS.

Technical Coordinator, Mr. M. P. Parameswaran Nair, Finance Manager, Mr. K. C. Pillai and Engineer, Ms. Lekha, were present at the press conference.

Employment exchange inauguration

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Feb. 5.

The Labour and Tourism Minister, Mr. Aryadun Mohammed, will inaugurate the newly sanctioned Paravur town employment exchange on February 7.

The Panchayats and Social Welfare Minister, Mr. P. K. K. Bava, will inaugurate the meeting to be held in connection with this. The Finance Minister, Mr. C. V. Padmanabhan, will preside.

Cost-effective and environment-friendly housing concept emerging, says expert

From Lawrence Pinto

MUSCAT — Apparently people may just dismiss the "Nirmithi NRI Housing Scheme" as another of those numerous real estate projects that are being offered to non-resident Indians.

But the project, promoted by the Kerala State Nirmithi Kendra, is more than what meets the eye. The Nirmithi Nu-tech construction, apart from helping to reduce the cost by up to 30 per cent, aims at promoting the housing concept of the future.

The buoyancy provided by the Nirmithi Kendra to the housing scenario in India has earned appreciation not only within the country but also from international agencies, including the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (UNCHS).

A combination of cost-effective technology and use of local material makes the Nirmithi Nu-tech construction an affordable alternative to the common man. In a country with an estimated housing shortage of 40 million houses, the institution appears destined to play an important role.

This nature-friendly habitat concept was pioneered by C. V. Ananda Bose, when he launched it as an experiment in Qulion district of Kerala in 1986.



C. V. ANANDA BOSE

Mr Bose was then collector of Kollayam. Currently he is secretary to the chief minister and director of the state's Nirmithi Kendra.

Mr Bose, who was in Oman earlier this week, said that following the success of the Qulion Nirmithi Kendra, the government of India had decided to set up such centres in all parts of the country. "The concept forms an integral part of the National Housing Policy. The government of India have instructed all state governments to encourage and ensure 20 per cent of their annual construction jobs to Nirmithi Kendra." He said that assignments

undertaken by the centre range from houses, schools, public buildings, industrial establishments. "In fact just anything from smokeless ovens to TV relay stations and tribal shelters to star hotels."

Mr Bose said that the centre also offered hands-on training programme to provide orientation to unemployed youth in the mechanics of cost-effective technologies, to develop expertise in technology themselves among artisans, masons, architects and engineers.

"Efforts are also on to offer post-graduate diploma and advanced diploma courses in Habitat Technology through recognised institutes and universities," he said.

Standardised building materials are prefabricated on a mass scale and materials like soil stabilised blocks, rubber filler block, concrete hollow blocks, funicular shells, L-panel etc are produced by the centre. "Distribution of these materials is limited by Building Materials Super Bazar at district level and Nirmithi Fair Price Shops in rural areas."

Mr Bose says the centre has also established a Research and Development (R&D) wing, which works for

the selection of appropriate technologies, appraisal of local materials, modification of technologies to suit local needs.

"Emphasis is always on cost reduction by minimising the use of cement and steel without compromising on quality and strength. At the same time vernacular architectural styles are used to achieve harmony with environment, energy conservation and minimum use of timber," he points out.

He said "There is a general fallacy that reduction of cost means compromise in quality. Nirmithi Kendra has demonstrated that modern living is possible by adopting Nu-tech building technology."

Some of the centre's projects which are in the pipeline include a habitat university, a coconut timber mill with French collaboration, a National Housing Museum and International Housing division.

"There are some 20 million viable coconut trees in Kerala which could be effectively used to produce timber and the finished product would give the same finish as teakwood."

Mr Bose is also at the helm of a team in Kuwait to produce the NRI housing scheme.

Nirmithi low-cost housing catching on



Nirmithi House in Trivandrum

MUSCAT — Kerala's construction boom has turned a new leaf with the distinct emergence of the cost-effective technology. Today, the building culture in Kerala which has so far ignored cost-effectiveness has been shaken to its roots with Nirmithi — an internationally recognised agency in this field.

And this is the vision of the director of the Kerala State Nirmithi Kerala, C.V. Ananda Bose, who was here recently as part of a Gulf tour in a bid to woo NRIs who are interested in the Nirmithi housing concept. He also shed light on the increasingly recognised agency in the field of most-effective building construction.

Bose told Times of Oman that of late there has been a spate of requests from Keralites living abroad to help construct houses for them using cost-effective technology and materials. "This trend should be encouraged, so that the concept of cost reduction in housing replaces the trend towards extravagant spending," Bose said.

With a view to solely catering to the needs of the NRIs they have started the Nirmithi NRI housing division. Their assignments include houses, schools, public buildings, industrial establishments — in fact just about anything from shackles given to TV relay stations and trial shelters to sea-north, according to Bose.

Nirmithi has been globally recognised. "Our organisational framework has been approved by the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements," Bose said, adding that they were covering both grounds and were not using the NRI.

A detailed project on an 'Bosillage' has been presented to the UN for approval. Besides this, Nirmithi Kerala in Kollam was conferred the 'Special Habitat Award' by the government of India and HUDCO.

Bose, who is also the secretary to the Kerala Chief Minister, K. Karunakaran, was individually awarded with the same honour, and he was also bestowed with the Jawaharalal Nehru Award in 1993.

The Nirmithi concept was recognised by the Indian government by including it in the National Housing Policy and the Urban Budget, and decided to set up Nirmithi Kendras in all the districts in the country. "Two hundred and seventy Kendras have already been set up," Bose informed.

They were also among the academic community, and some have started post graduate courses based on the Nirmithi concept of cost-effectiveness. "Many other universities, including the Mahatma Gandhi University, are adopting this approach," Bose said.

The Nirmithi design emphasises vernacular architecture in harmony with the environment, energy conservation and optimum use of timber. "In fact, a unique blend of modernity and eco-friendliness," Bose stressed.

The Nirmithi construction reduces cost upto 30 per cent using materials like soil stabilised blocks, rubber floor blocks, jettim concrete blocks etc. "All of which cut down cement and steel use without compromising on quality and strength," according to Bose. For the shakeries in the quality-habit, Nirmithi had built earthquake resistant houses.

Bose pointed out that houses were being destroyed in the name of reconstruction. In this respect, their technique had replaced timber.

He dispelled various criticisms — including that they were 'un-engineered' — levelled against Nirmithi, stating that they strictly followed traditional structural engineering. He added that they speak optimum use of the materials. He also pointed out that the organisation was run by youngsters. "That is its main strength," he said.

Gulf Daily News, Sunday 23rd February 1997

Eco-friendly homes offer

By SOMAN BABY

● New UN award-winning technology to cut costs

BAHRAIN is being offered award-winning technology to build environment-friendly homes.

The offer came from an Indian civil servant, who has developed technology for constructing cost-effective and environment-friendly (Coef) houses.

CV Ananda Bose, secretary to Kerala Government and director of the Kerala State Nirmithi Kendra, said the technology, which has won a UN award and now widely being used in Kerala, could be modified to suit the climatic and environmental conditions in the Gulf.

Mr Bose was in Bahrain on a three-hour stop on his way to Kuwait where he is scheduled to attend a series of Indian Embassy-sponsored programmes.

A distinguished officer of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), he developed the new technology in 1985 to help people

who lost their houses to sea erosion and flood in Quilon, where he was then posted as the District Collector.

Mr Bose said the Kuwait Government had already shown interest in adopting the "coef" technology for their housing projects.

The technology, developed in co-ordination with the Central Building Research Institute and some other research and development institutions in India, is based on the use of certain envi-

ronment-friendly substitutes for concrete and timber," he said.

"By optimising the use of good quality materials, avoiding wastes and combining utility with beauty, the new technology has proved successful in cutting costs by at least 30 per cent."

"We have already constructed or provided back-up services for about 300,000 such houses in Kerala."

Mr Bose said the "coef" technology was displayed at an international housing exhibition organised by the UN human settlement organisation, Habitat, in Istanbul in June last year.

"We have been honoured by Habitat by recognising it as one of the best construction practices in

the world," he said. "The exhibition was also followed by the establishment of an international organisation called Global Nirmithi Ner (GNN).

"Besides the Istanbul chapter, more than 100 institutions and individuals in 35 countries are already members of GNN."

The UN recently provided a Web site on the Internet for GNN.

"Representatives of the Helsinki University are currently in Kerala to get acquainted with the new technology,"

said Mr Bose.

"A group of Swedish housing experts will also visit Kerala shortly for the same purpose."

Mr Bose, who is also the director of the Nirmithi National Institute of Habitat Management, said he was very keen to see the establishment of a GNN chapter in Bahrain.

"We shall be only too pleased to part with this technology with Bahraini engineers and architects for the development of housing projects in Bahrain at low costs," he said.



Mr Bose

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THE GNN EVENTS

THE HINDU, Tuesday, June 15, 2000



The Nigerian High Commissioner to India, Mr. Habib O. Elabor (with the head-gear), holding talks with the Chief Minister, Mr. E.K. Nayannar, in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday.

KUWAIT TIMES, SATURDAY, MAY 18, 1996

Nirmithi to participate in Kuwait's habitat bloom

By a Staff Reporter

KUWAIT: The Kerala State Nirmithi Kendra (Building centre) will hopefully participate in the habitat development of Kuwait soon, a top Indian official has said.

C.V. Ananda Bose, the founder-director of the centre, told Kuwait Times during his recent visit that positive negotiations have been going on towards this goal.

Bose held detailed discussions with Indian Ambassador BMC Nayar on this matter which was a sequel to the ambassador's visit to the Kerala State Nirmithi Kendra in Thiruvananthapuram for in-depth study of India's premier movement in the field of cost-effective and environment friendly building systems popularly known as 'CEEFF technology'.

"Nirmithi is an organisation with commitment — that makes all the difference," Ambassador Nayar opined about the unique Indian experience that has been adjudged by the United Nations as one of the "best practices in the world" in the field of housing.

Nirmithi won this distinguished UN recognition within just 10 years of its existence.

"It is an acknowledgement of the quality and culture of Nirmithi Kendra," said Bose, the driving force behind the movement.

Kerala State Nirmithi Kendra has behind it a saga of determined efforts to provide high-tech solutions to the problems of shelter, Bose pointed out.

According to him, it all started as a crisis management venture in Kollam District of India's Kerala State 10 years back when Bose

was the collector or chief district administrator.

The state witnessed massive floods in 1985 which rendered thousands homeless. Bose introduced the new technology options developed at India's Research and Development (R & D) institutions to provide houses to the victims of the floods.

The first Nirmithi Kendra in Kerala was formed to provide the necessary back-up for rehabilitation housing projects. From then on there has been no looking-back.

Gradually Nirmithi experiments were made part of India's housing policy. The replicas of the institution were made throughout India.

Today, it is a massive movement in India, having a wide network of Nirmithi Kendras in urban and rural areas. In addition, the mobile Nirmithi Kendras or Nirmithi on Wheels take the CEEFF technology from laboratory to land.

The crowning glory came when the 14th convention of the UN Commission on Human Settlements recommended that other countries also set up institutions on the model of Nirmithi Kendras, Bose said proudly.

While talking about other achievements of his institution, Bose said: "Nirmithi's efficiency was put to the test at Lathoor, a district of the Indian State of Maharashtra, which was hit by the worst ever earthquake of the country." The Kerala State Nirmithi Kendra lost no time in springing into action to construct houses for the rehabilitation of the survivors of the quake. A whole

township was constructed by the Nirmithi Kendra using its quake-resistant design and technology.

Today, the Nirmithi Township in Lathoor stands as the tell-tale evidence of the Nirmithi building culture. It was constructed by time-bound and cost-effective execution, Bose said.

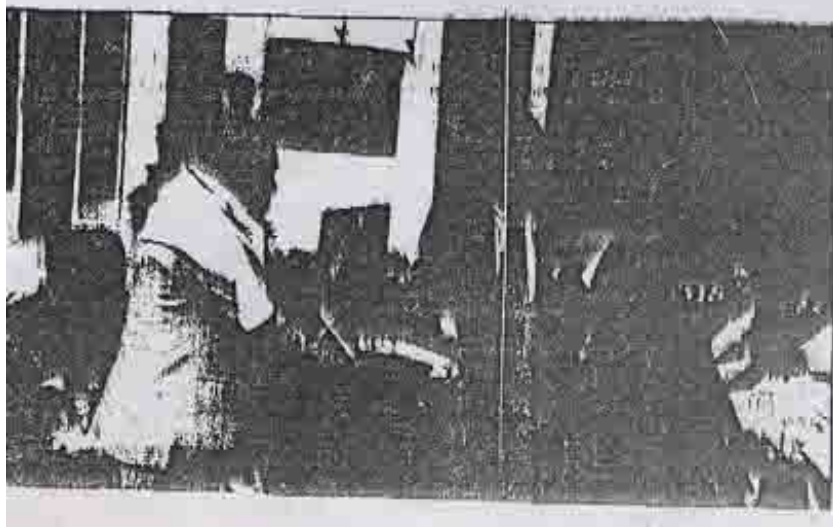
Today, international agencies are wooing Nirmithi to undertake mega projects in Lathoor on their behalf," he added.

The then prime minister of India P.V. Narasimha Rao, who received the keys of the Nirmithi Township in Lathoor, sanctioned the permission to set up 500 Nirmithi Kendras in rural India as a token of appreciation.

The Govt of India has already chosen Bose, the founder and propagator of the Nirmithi Kendra concept, for the National Habitat Award, taking into consideration his outstanding contributions to the field of housing. Bose is also the recipient of the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship.

While concluding his talk, Bose said that the Kerala State Nirmithi Kendra offers a variety of services world over. These include technology transfer, consultancy for establishing building centres, undertaking R and D efforts suitable to the country's requirements, human resources development, and setting up of environment friendly townships as well as villages.

"Nirmithi can also provide expert assistance in different aspects of human settlements," the renowned habitat expert added.



GNN offers technical aid to Jabalpur district

NEW DELHI, May 26

The Global Nirmithi Net (GNN) set up a year ago following the Habitat II conference in Istanbul, has offered its earth-quake resistant building technology used extensively in the reconstruction of Latur some years ago, to the earth-quake hit Jabalpur district in Madhya Pradesh.

The GNN's eco-friendly, low-cost technology which was identified as one among the 100 initiatives as "Global best practice", or the GBP-100. These initiatives are considered to embody the quintessence of the best that has been thought and done by human initiatives. Mr. C. V. Ananda Bose, secretary general of GNN, said at a press conference at the conclusion of the annual conference concluded the Capital today. These concept of cost-effective and environment friendly (CEEFF) habitats were pioneered by the Kerala State Nirmithi Kendra and GNN was set up at the suggestion of the kendra to provide a global network for dissemination of information and experiences of the GBP-100, Mr. Bose said. The appropriate technology and design for the Jabalpur area would be offered to the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister. Mr. Digvijay Singh, the GNN chairman Mr. P. Subramanian Potti, retired judge said.

The GNN, which has instituted the GNN Laurel award to honour those whose life and mission have "made the world a better place to live in", has chosen Mother Theresa as the first awardee this year, and she had already conveyed her acceptance, Mr. Bose said.

The GNN, which has chapters in Turkey, India, Kuwait, is in the process of opening more in Switzerland, Belgium, Finland, USA, Ukraine, Mauritius, Germany, Singapore, Russia, U.K., Russia. It plans to set up local chapters in many parts of India including Chennai, Bangalore, Delhi, Jaipur, Ernakulam, Wynad, Palghat and Coimbatore, and London, Tokyo, Warsaw, Moscow and Kiev.

The three programmes to be launched soon by GNN are Project Human Wealth, designed to bring out the best in human initiatives, Project Commit to ensure the greater participation of the individual in community development, and Project Globe-Tot to expose children to the best of "what is in store for them tomorrow".